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## PARAPSYCHOLOGY REVIEW

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## TWENTY-THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE PARAPSYCHOLOGY FOUNDATION

### QUANTUM PHYSICS AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY

A Report by Charles Paneth

For two warm days in August, set against the snow-capped peaks of Mont Blanc, a group of ten scientists met at the La Reserve Hotel in Geneva, Switzerland to discuss the field of parapsychology. The occasion was the 23rd annual International Conference sponsored by the Parapsychology Foundation. The ten participants from five different countries were all, by profession or schooling, physicists, and the conference was intriguingly titled "Quantum Physics and Parapsychology." What does quantum physics, a discipline with still many mysteries and paradoxes, have to do with parapsychology? Well that was the point of the conference. And as its name implies, it was a highly technical meeting—one that generated some bold and imaginative ideas. What follows is a report of the highlights of that gathering.

A cat is in a box with the lid closed. (Schrödinger, Persian or Himalayan, your choice, for as you will see it makes no difference.) A gun is also in the box. It is rigged to a cosmic ray detector so that the gun will fire a bullet whenever a cosmic burst is detected. Some time passes.

Question: Without opening the box, is the cat dead or alive?

A riddle? Yes it is. A very serious one known to physicists as the famous Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen Paradox. And

the fate of that helpless cat was one major topic of discussion at the Geneva Conference.

But what does the cat paradox have to do with the field of parapsychology? Does it require a clairvoyant to solve the mystery?

No, an ordinary physicist can handle it. Make that two physicists; for there are two distinctly different answers to the riddle, and both are correct—hence the term paradox. A classically schooled physicist could simply say that the cat is dead. A quantum physicist, however, would have to say that the cat is exactly one-half alive and one-half dead. Not that there is a fifty-fifty chance that the cat is alive or dead; simply that the cat is half-alive and half-dead. A peculiar state of existence. If that's enough to make the cat neurotic, years ago it did the same thing to physicists. (Now they have come to live with the situation but not necessarily like it.) If the quantum physicist's answer sounds irrational, is a way it is. But wait a minute . . . Before going any further into the heart of the Geneva meeting, where many of the topics discussed might otherwise sound as peculiar as the famous cat paradox, let us go back in time, back to the mid-1800s when all this confusion began.

Up until that time many scientists thought they had the ultimate, all-embracing model of the physical world in

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## DEMONIC POSSESSION AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY

By D. Scott Rogo

Man has always been fascinated by the supernatural. One chief finding in mainline parapsychology and anthropological-parapsychological research is that behind a core of socially evoked belief systems and in which different culture tones, what we call psi may underlie supernatural traditions. The concept of demonic possession, the mental and motor takeover of a human personality by a supernatural being, is universal. Significantly, the actual manifestation of the possession syndrome in phenomenologically the same in vastly different cultures. As the Catholic theologian Rev. John J. Nicks has pointed out, demon possession and exorcism cases are nearly identical in Roman Catholic cases and rituals and Chinese cases.<sup>1</sup>

Why should parapsychologists be interested in what may seem to be a relic of superstition, culturally determined belief systems, and religious dogma? There are two complementary answers to this. First, cases of alleged demonic possession presumably show highly specific psi effects: the "demon-inhabiter" is supposed to be able to employ both ESP and PK during his possession. In fact, reports of resistant displays of PK are a traditional part of possession cases. In this regard, many cases seem to develop out of more conventional poltergeist episodes. This is a theme which will be developed later. Secondly, the concept of demon possession as a very real supernatural state has been given credence and popularization via the recent publicity about Blatty's novel, *The Exorcist*, and its subsequent film adaptation. Both presentations have sparked controversy because of the fact that the events fictionally represented were based on a purportedly true case of diabolic possession occurring in Georgetown in 1949. This in turn has led to the issuance of several quasi-parapsychological publications on the subject.<sup>2,3</sup>

In this presentation two questions will be considered. First, do cases of reported demonic possession represent a genuine phenomenon that is within the proper study of parapsychology? And secondly, if so, what types of explanation can be offered to account for the psychological and parapsychological phenomenology of these cases.

In answer to the first query, the very diagnosis of demonic possession is based on the types of phenomena studied in conventional parapsychology. The possession syndrome begins with the victim being physically taken over by a new personality which usually claims to be a demon or a legion of demons. At this point possession cases conform not to anything parapsychological, but to those of conventional psychopathology. These would include paranoid delusions of the supernatural and some cases of hysteria in which the victim projects inner guilt into the delusion of demonic possession. However, Catholic doctrine does prescribe that genuine possession cases will evince certain phenomena out of keeping with abnormal psychology, but consistent with the supernatural. To elaborate a bit on the actual wording used to diagnose possession in the *Rituale Romanum*, these would include the

ability of the possessed person (or personalities) to: (a) speak or understand a foreign language never studied; parapsychologically classified as xenoglossy or polyglot mediumship; (b) foretell future events or show extrasensory awareness of the thoughts and/or actions of those about him, or of distant situations; (c) display superhuman strength or manifestations of power beyond the subject's natural age; (d) exhibit other phenomena of a particularly vicious nature which, while in variance with the subject's own personality, suggest demonic intervention. In addition to these primary diagnostic categories, one might also include poltergeist phenomena, aversion to religious rituals and objects, and other symptoms which might be either psychologically or supernaturally significant.

While many theological writings on the demonic possession syndrome do give token appreciation to parapsychological methodology and traditions, the foremost systematic presentation on the interrelation between conventional Catholic doctrines and parapsychology has been made by Gonzalo Baldacci<sup>4</sup> during his residency at Audiot of the Apostolic Delegation of Jerusalem, Palestine and Cyprus. Baldacci specifically distinguished between possession symptoms of a psychic (psychological) order and those of a diabolic-parapsychological order. The former would include the manifestation of a foreign personality using the victim's body, dissociation, violent and obscene behavior, paroxysms and other symptoms which, while suggestive of and consistent with the possession hypothesis, are nonetheless also classified as manifestations of psychological dysfunction such as hysteria, Gilles de la Tourette syndrome ("ticking tickle"), etc. The supernatural symptoms have already been outlined.

However, Baldacci not only felt that parapsychology could be of aid in the diagnosis of possession, but also indicated that parapsychology has a specific function and dominant role in this diagnosis. "In fact," he says, "some of the manifestations common to the demonic—doubtless the most important—bear a resemblance to the phenomena proper to parapsychology. Moreover, the presence of the phenomenology of a parapsychological order, added to that of a psychical order, represents, as we have seen, a strong indication in favor of diabolic possession."

Baldacci's use of the word "resemblance" is more important than meets the eye, for it suggests a theme to be taken up later: Are these phenomena truly supernatural in the psychological sense of being representations of our own psi ability, or do they represent something much deeper?

Having substantiated that the basic phenomena of demonic possession is, in fact, of a parapsychological nature,

the next question is: Are there any cases of the syndrome with evidential backing—consistent with the degree of evidence required in parapsychology? To illustrate the affirmative position I would like to offer summaries of two twentieth century cases of diabolical possession.

The Earling, Iowa, case is perhaps the most well established account of this phenomenon. As with many possession cases the events were not highly publicized but were recorded in privately printed and circulated pamphlets. The story of the 1928 Iowa case, well observed by several witnesses who placed their testimony on record, was originally issued in a short booklet, *Beginnings of Father Carl Vogt's Little* was known about the case and copies of the pamphlet were extremely rare when it first came to my attention. Subsequently with the vast interest in possession and exorcism cases, the pamphlet was reissued and the case has since become better known. The chief role in the case was assumed by Theophilus Kinsinger, a highly regarded priest and moralist of his day. (He died in 1941.)

The victim, a woman of 40, was taken from her home and brought to Earling especially for the exorcism rite. She had shown symptoms of demonic takeover since the age of fourteen when she began to show an abhorrence of anything religious and became aware of mocking inner voices, but remained psychiatrically normal during periods of lucidity between the obsession phases. Eventually, however, the psychological symptoms of her disorder merged into the parapsychological type and she began to understand foreign languages, could differentiate coarseness between blessed and neutral religious objects and began to manifest a personality which physically possessed her. It was at this time that the Church officials sanctioned exorcism. At first the exorcism was secretly held and witnessed only by the exorcist, by Father Siegel, by his sister, who occupied the Church and rectory in Earling, and by several nuns. However, the bizarre displays exhibited by the diabolical (the person possessed), the horrendously violent and noisy episodes during the rituals soon became public knowledge in the city, and so the final testimony rests on an impressively large number of witnesses.

During the woman's stay in Earling, but before the formal exorcism, the demonic personality could differentiate between blessed and unblessed food. When the exorcism was begun, "with lightning speed the possessed dislodged herself from her bed and from the hands of her guards; and her body, carried through the air, landed high above the door of the room and clung to the wall with a tremendous grip. . . . Real force had to be applied to her feet to bring her down from her high position on the wall. The testimony was that she could cling to the wall at all. . . ."

While this account may seem to be unbelievable, the above quote is based on a first hand report. Levitation of the human body is one of the most persistently recorded PK effects occurring during possession. It was not only witnessed at Earling, but also during the 1949 Georgetown case (to be presented shortly), and Nicks in his recent study has included two even more modern accounts of the phenomenon recorded by fellow priests. The usual two-PK explanation for levitation seen during possession is that it is based on common body-arching sports

observed during hysterical and epileptiform seizures, and on malobservation. In these instances the body arches into almost a complete semicircle, with only the toes and top of the head touching the ground. It has been suggested that in possession cases body arching is malobserved as levitation due to the powerful emotional setting at the time.<sup>5</sup> This explanation, though, cannot explain such clear cut observations of levitation as witnessed in the Earling case and other cases shortly to be summarized.

During the rites of exorcism several further psi or unaccountable effects were noted: the demonic could understand foreign languages perfectly; vomited massive amounts of bile utterly out of keeping with the limited food intake of the victim (a universal possession phenomenon found in many cases from the United States to China); and displayed clairvoyant or telepathic awareness of distant events or thoughts of the priests in attendance. Odd noises simultaneously plagued the home of the attendants; independent voices were constantly heard in the vicinity of the victim, and an awful blasting of the body occurred. Finally after twenty-three days of rituals, the demons who claimed possession of the victim's speech and body were exorcised. Later, however, though this was not mentioned, the possession re-occurred itself and another exorcism had to be performed in Milwaukee. At present an independent attempt is being made to track down witnesses to these events.<sup>6</sup>

The 1949 Georgetown case likewise has a fascinating history. Although details of the case broke in the press in 1959 and later a watered-down version of them appeared in *Fate*, the true chronicle of events did not reach the public until Blatty's use of the case as the basis for *The Exorcist*. At that time a few more details began to appear in *Newsweek*, in Blatty's own subsequent book, *I'll Tell Them I Remember You*, and in the popular press. However none of the generally objective sources gave an insight into the incredibly gruesome and vicious nature of what began as a conventional poltergeist case. The details of the Georgetown case have only recently been made public with the first complete summary of the case based on the records of the several witnesses including family members, friends, physicians, and the testimony of the attending priests. The summary appeared in 1974 in Nicks's *Diabolical Possession and Exorcism* (already referred to). The Blatty film adaptation follows the outline of the history of the case fairly well, but I will abridge it again emphasizing the parapsychological circumstances of the case.

The victim was a thirteen-year-old Lutheran boy whose possession began shortly after his attempts at Ouija board experimentation. He weighed 95 pounds and had not yet reached puberty. The first intimations of the possession seizure were poltergeist in nature. Odd sounds were heard in the house, furniture was found displaced and objects disappeared. These movements led to full blown telekinesis observed by several family members and distinguished witnesses. (According to Catholic theology, these events would be classified as an infestation, a demonic influence over a place not a person.) These events were focused on the boy and occurred even during his school hours, which re-

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sulted in his leaving school in favor of private tutoring. At this time a complete medical and physical examination of the boy revealed nothing abnormal. However, the infestation began growing more intense including a well witnessed levitation of the boy and his mattress. This incredible levitation was repeated several times more in the course of the outbreak both in and out of the boy's home and even at the hospital where he was finally treated. Since the psychiatrists and medical authorities were of little help, the parents began seeking religious counsel. Here another witness enters the scene, the family minister, who observed not only the boy's levitation, but also his violent spasms as he was bounced up and down on the bed. Reportedly a parapsychological group was meeting in the city at the time and allegedly some parapsychologists witnessed these displays.

Six weeks after the onset of the poltergeist the symptoms began evolving into a more conventional possession case. First, the boy began having seizures during which he would be possessed by a new personality and his voice would speak in a "deep, gravelly, raucous voice, using the most obscene and degrading language." This last development led the parents to seek Roman Catholic assistance. The onset of this exorcism stage, when religious authorities tried to rid the boy of the "demon," brought with it even more violent effects. (Remember that the boy and his family were still Lutheran.) The boy was moved out of the city to St. Louis for the exorcism and during the first exorcism rites the 95-pound boy succeeded in ripping

a spring from his bed, broke loose from several attendants, and slashed one of the priest's arms. This was only one of many almost murderous acts he carried out with near superhuman strength. During the ten weeks of exorcism the room's temperature fluctuated and sometimes became icy cold; his whole body became bloated; and he spat directly into the eyes of the exorcist with incredible accuracy, darting his head about like a snake. Lastly he also showed understanding of foreign languages, ability to speak in Latin, and extrasensory awareness of the exorcist's thoughts. Another bizarre feature of the possession was the appearance of welts, in the form of words, on the boy's body. Finally, an explosion-like sound wracked the hospital in which he was being treated which signified the end of the case; the boy was found cured, but with amnesia for the possession fits. The exorcist lost 50 pounds during the ordeal and the boy became Roman Catholic. The victim is still alive and leads a normal adult life with his own family.

Neither the Earling nor the Georgetown case is unique in possession lore. In 1967 Raymond Bayless first postulated that the poltergeist-possession case might represent a syndrome distinct from conventional poltergeist cases.<sup>9</sup> The following chart is based on cases used by Bayless, Cristiani,<sup>10</sup> and my own historical research. It represents a much abbreviated summary of a few cases showing the psychological and parapsychological phenomenology of the best evidenced poltergeist-possession cases. Note that these poltergeist-possession cases follow a general pattern:

#### A GENERAL SURVEY OF SELECTED POLTERGEIST-POSSESSION CASES

<i>Date</i>	<i>Place and Subject</i>	<i>Psychological-Physiological Characteristics</i>	<i>Parapsychological Characteristics</i>
1776	Untzell Group possession	Convulsions. Swelling and bloating of the body.	Independent voices. Animal sounds heard; furniture moved telekinetically.
1850	France Helen Poirier	Rigidity of the body; convulsions and contortions; pulled about by invisible force; foamed at the mouth, screamed obscenities.	Raps, levitations of the body, bed shaken, spoke unlearned languages.
1864-1869	Illfurth, France two brothers, aged 7 and 9	Convulsions, whirling around at fantastic speed, rigidity of the body, shouted obscenities, hatred of all religious objects, contortions.	Spoke unlearned languages, predicted future events, levitated objects.
1906-1907	Natal Young girl	Convulsions, swelling of the body, elongation of the body, formation of odd lumps under the skin, aversion to religious objects.	Superphysical elongations, levitations of the body. (Witnesses included one bishop.)
1914	France Young boy	Convulsions, violent reactions to anything religious.	Telekinesis.
1924-1925	Phat-Dien, Viet-Nam Young novice	Hysteria.	Showers of foreign objects, raps, disembodied sounds.



his chart is certainly not exhaustive by any means, is only a rough sampling of the poltergeist-possession scene.

I have now concluded the first part of this paper showing that: (1) demonic possession is of concern to parapsychology and (2) that there is sufficient testimony and material to accept the genuine nature of the syndrome.

Having advanced this position the next problem is simply how can we explain these cases? Possession cases might be explained by three different hypotheses. These are: (a) That demonic possession is a form of hysteria which uses PK and ESP to reinforce the victim's delusion of demonic control. (b) That it is a conventional poltergeist attack in which the possession syndrome is only auxiliary, being manifested by suggestion or religious belief. (c) That there exists a phenomenologically distinct possession-poltergeist syndrome which only superficially resembles the conventional poltergeist. In these cases it would appear that indeed a demonic force has taken physical control over a human body. This is, of course, the conventional Catholic viewpoint.<sup>11</sup> The pros and cons of each of these theories will now be discussed.

**Totally independent and ostensibly evil beings can also easily account for the vicious and even murderous nature of the poltergeist-possession victim, a type of viciousness not found in any phase of conventional mediumship."**

I have suggested, along with others<sup>12</sup> that persons in normal frames of mind could employ psi to fulfill needs to reinforce delusional systems. That the hysterical personality might use ESP and PK to reinforce his delusions is theoretically feasible, although factually unsupported. It is well known that many years ago hysteria often manifested in the form of possession symptoms. Pierre Janet in his *L'Automatisme Psychologique* (1888) offered several cases of pseudo-possession, the most famous of which was the case of Achilles. Achilles, a country boy, manifested all the conventional physical symptoms of possession: convulsions, unbelievable contortions, a "demonic entity" which verbally assaulted him, etc. At the same time, these symptoms seem identical to classical possession cases although they do not show any paranormal activity. It seems reasonable that, indeed, hysterics could use their own PK and ESP to give added confirmation to their delusional symptoms. In his cases Janet found fairly consistent psychological dynamics behind them. Usually pseudo-possession was caused by self-guilt. In order to punish himself the victim to "punish" himself for a moral transgression,

which the victim himself considered a sin (such as infidelity), a delusion of supernatural persecution is built up. The guilt complex, manifesting as possession, is thus fashioned upon his own religious belief systems.

**"Could it be . . . that cases of possession are really conventional poltergeist cases in which the delusion of possession arises later and is caused by suggestion?"**

Now what are the pros and cons of this theory? First, physically the symptoms of pseudo-possession and classical demoniacal possession are similar—seizures, contortions, loss of autonomic and verbal control, even abnormal bloating of the body. Secondly, there is a curious and stunning sex differentiation and bias in both hysteria and possession. Hysteria is generally held to be more prevalent in women at the ratio of approximately 10 to 1. If one graphs possession cases (that is, ostensibly genuine possession cases), one finds this same approximate ratio of women victims to male victims! Secondly, hysterical reactions (especially conversion reactions) are more prevalent in adolescents and young adults which also is consistent with the fact that demonic possession cases<sup>13</sup> seem to focus more often on children or young persons than on adults. Finally, there seems to be a noticeable decrease of demonic possession cases in the present century (Nicola estimates it at 20 cases). This could be due to the fact that the Catholic Church keeps such incidents carefully hidden and avoids any publicity about them. So an accurate count is hard to make. Nonetheless some theologians have pointed out that in Western culture, possession cases are getting rarer. This, too, is consistent with the hysteria theory since classical hysteria is also becoming progressively more infrequent in our society.

However, despite these curious parallels there are damning arguments against the hysteria-ESP/PK explanation. Firstly, any person having hysterical traits would reveal them under psychological testing and psychiatric observation. In both the Earling and Georgetown cases psychodiagnostic evaluations of the victims were made, and in each case no hysterical tendencies were found. More specifically, the Georgetown boy was found to be psychologically normal during the initial infestation period of his possession. Any mental dysfunction so great as to cause the total disintegration associated with pseudo-possession or hysteria (and concomitantly needed to invoke poltergeist displays) certainly would have been isolated during the psychiatric observations undertaken. Since it was not, the Georgetown case goes beyond psychiatry—and it takes the whole possession-poltergeist syndrome with it.

Even phenomenologically, hysteria and demonic possession can be contrasted. The demoniac is horrified at the possession symptoms, while in classical hysteria the patient is peculiarly passive, almost indifferent, to his plight. Secondly, and more important, hysteria is projected inward. The victim wishes to punish himself and no one else. Yet diabolical possession cases are vicious, even murderous and



there have been deaths recorded during them. In the Earling case the demoniac almost succeeded in killing Father Steiger *at a distance* and the Georgetown boy slashed one arm, broke the bones of two attendants, and almost killed his own mother. This is strikingly different from the neurotic self-afflicting plight of the hysteric!

Lastly, the hysteria-psi explanation could *still* have a glimmer of support if it could be shown that hysterics are prone to show psi abilities. But such is not the case. Although some of the older parapsychologists such as René Sudre, F. W. H. Myers and F. Moser argued that psychic sensitivity was related to hysterical personalities, this view has been discredited. (It is likely that this antiquated view was based on the early association of ESP with hypnosis which, because of the work of Charcot, was thought to be particularly manifest in hysterics.) However, there is no experimental evidence for the existence of ESP or PK sensitivity in hysterics above that of the normal population. Since personality measurements correlated with psi performance have generally shown that neurotic symptoms dull ESP ability, it is unlikely that hysterics would be ESP prone. (See a recent paper and overview by Giorgio Alberti on this topic.)<sup>14</sup> Taken together it would seem that while theoretically possible, the hysteria-ESP/PK explanation for diabolical possession has no support other than a few statistical inferences based on frequency analysis. Further, there are only two poltergeist cases in which the victim showed hysterical personality traits, according to A. R. G. Owen's study of poltergeist effects.

Could it be, though, that cases of possession are really conventional poltergeist cases in which the delusion of possession arises later, and is caused by suggestion? Several cases do indicate this. If one looks over my chart of cases it will be noted that the parapsychological content seems to suggest conventional poltergeist outbreaks. The Phat-Diem 1924-25 case, for example, included showers of objects and raps. It seems likely that in this case the young novice merely was thrown into hysteria by poltergeist antics. Influenced by her religio-cultural beliefs, she rationalized that she was becoming the focus of demonic agencies and this delusion caused a subsequent hysterical pseudo-possession attack.

In several cases, the onset of possession occurred only after the start of the PK effects. In the Georgetown case, the PK effects lasted for over six weeks before the possession phase took over. It was only after the family began to think in terms of demonic possession that the boy began to manifest the classical symptoms. This certainly looks as though suggestion was the root of the possession syndrome. There are other sources of evidence for this simple poltergeist explanation of possession cases. Frank Podmore was the first to note that poltergeists focus predominantly on adolescents, usually female, at an approximate 6 to 1 ratio.<sup>15</sup> This is consistent with the frequency of female over male victims in possession-poltergeist cases. It is also consistent with the finding that a majority of possession cases center on the young. (In recent years, though, there seem to be more male agents than female agents in conventional poltergeist exhibits.)<sup>16</sup> Just as the demoniac is

violently anti-religious, a well-known propensity of the poltergeist is to destroy or telekinetically affect religious objects. This was noted by Herbert Thurston<sup>17</sup> and later emphasized by Bayless.<sup>18</sup>

What of the PK phenomena themselves, though? It is here that one begins to see that a different set of manifestations occurs which differentiates between the conventional poltergeist and the possession-poltergeist. To begin with, many of the possession-poltergeist phenomena are identical with those of the conventional poltergeist—telekinesis, odd noises, raps, and, in Hans Bender's cases, the ESP ability of the agent. Even the odd bloating of the human body is known in classical poltergeist cases. Esther, the focus of the Amherst poltergeist, was afflicted with this phenomenon<sup>19</sup> which is also known in hysteria (*aerophagy* and *hysterical meteorism*). Yet possession-poltergeist cases also show several types of phenomena which are very rare and even atypical of the classical poltergeist and it is to this important point that I now wish to turn.

By far the two *most frequent* paranormal displays shown by the possession-poltergeist are: (1) The agent understanding or using unlearned languages, this being one of the major points for diagnosing demoniacal possession. (2) The levitation of the human body.

Xenoglossy, so common in possession cases, is unheard of in the literature on the classical poltergeist. In fact, the phenomenon is only known in one form in parapsychology—polyglot mediumship in which the medium's communicator (presumably a discarnate entity) employs or understands languages foreign to the psychic. In no poltergeist case recorded, to my knowledge, has this phenomenon *ever* been recorded. The implication here is great, for if a type of phenomenon occurs prolifically in one syndrome and rarely, if at all, in another syndrome, then this more than suggests that the two syndromes are phenomenologically distinct. Therefore, poltergeist and possession-poltergeist, although resembling each other, may well be two different phenomena.

**"What of the PK phenomena themselves, though? It is here that one begins to see that a different set of manifestations occurs which differentiate between the conventional poltergeist and the possession-poltergeist."**

Similarly, levitation of the human body is found infrequently in classical poltergeist outbreaks. A. R. G. Owen records in his *Can We Explain the Poltergeist?* that the phenomenon of levitation is conspicuously absent in modern poltergeist cases.<sup>20</sup> In reviewing Owen's section on poltergeist levitations, by far the majority of these reports were recorded in classical poltergeist-possession cases. The only modern account of the phenomenon seems to be a case reported by Thurston in 1934 in which a sleeping boy was lifted from his bed. Yet despite this rarity in classical poltergeist cases *most* possession cases include levitation of the human body. Again this suggests a different

mechanism operating between poltergeist and possession-poltergeist cases.

Lastly, there are a few secondary phenomena known within the possession syndrome which are hardly ever found in poltergeist cases. These would include: prolific independent voices (independent voices are recorded in poltergeist cases but only speak a very few words and usually dissipate shortly after, as I have noted elsewhere);<sup>21</sup> vomiting gallons (!) of foreign matter; superhuman strength; personality disintegration not associated with the poltergeist; and PK effects over great distances. This last phenomenon deserves special comment. It is well known that the poltergeist centers on an individual and may follow him wherever he goes. However, in possession cases PK effects occur over long distances. In the Earling case, PK-type occurrences broke out in Rev. Steiger's own home—a substantial distance from his church and rectory. This type of persecution-at-a-distance is a well-known and observed trait of the possession, usually plaguing the exorcist and his assistants. One might also note that poltergeists, while destructive, are short-lived and rarely harm anyone; possession-poltergeist cases show the exact opposite. They may go on for years and have resulted in deaths.

In conclusion it seems that while classical poltergeists and possession-poltergeists do share common ground, there are enough points of difference to compel us to believe that they are of an intrinsically different nature. This view is based on the fact that under closer examination they show grossly dissimilar types of PK and ESP effects and show different psychological dimensions.

Lastly we come to the orthodox Catholic viewpoint, that possession is caused by the physical intervention by demonic agencies into human affairs. This viewpoint however is not unique, for it is shared by both Western and Eastern religions and many cases do not center on Catholics. The syndrome cannot be said to be purely a manifestation of the victim's own religious indoctrination. For example, Laurence G. Thompson in his *Chinese Religion: An Introduction*, reprints an account of an eye-witnessed exorcism performed in 1961. In this Oriental case all the physiological features of a Western possession case appeared during which the demoniac revealed superhuman strength, his body bloated, he screamed obscenities, made vicious animal sounds, his body increased in weight to such a degree that his bed collapsed, he tried to kill the exorcist, etc.

The demonic theory can explain the ability of the victim to understand or use foreign languages since it is actually the "demon," not the victim, who is communicating, and controlling the body. Moreover, human ESP cannot explain the ability of a person to employ and properly use a foreign language which has never been studied. In mediumship, xenoglossy is one of the strongest evidences for the survival hypothesis, for no matter how we extend the super-ESP theory, it is hard to believe that via ESP one can instantly master a foreign tongue. Similarly, the ability of the demoniac to use and understand foreign languages indicates that the entity is independent of the

victim and not a manifestation of some fragmentation of the subject's own personality.

The demonic theory also explains the frequency of such phenomenology as independent voices, PK over great distances (since the "demon" could conceivably travel) and types of PK activity not usually associated with human PK ability. Totally independent and ostensibly evil beings can also easily account for the vicious and even murderous nature of the poltergeist-possession victim, a type of viciousness not found in any phase of conventional mediumship. In short, the conventional demonic theory which postulates that the agency manifesting is from without, not from within the victim's own mind, does explain the phenomenology of the poltergeist-possession better than the conventional poltergeist explanation.

Nonetheless, there are still barriers to this explanation. Although demonic possession is a universal phenomenon, cultural differences may be found in various geographical locations. For example, if we compare theological discussions between the exorcist and the "demon" in Western cases<sup>22</sup> (as in the Earling case) and similar conversations in Oriental cases,<sup>23</sup> one can find definite culturally oriented differences. This complicates acceptance of a single universal demonic theory (i.e., the Roman Catholic viewpoint) which would suggest that all cases of demoniacal possession are exactly the same phenomenon.

What can we say in conclusion? It is evident that all the theories proposed to account for demonic possession fall short of fitting the evidence precisely. Nonetheless, I can offer my own personal evaluation. Possession cases are more vicious, destructive, and show more violent PK and ESP manifestations than conventional poltergeists or any form of psychic ability whether it be manifested as a haunting, mediumship, or otherwise. Although I find myself in a quandary when it comes to accepting one general theory to account for the possession syndrome (especially because of the universal pattern of female over male ratios in hysteria, poltergeists, and possession chronicles which imply to my mind some sort of connecting link between all three states), my personal predilection is that poltergeist-possession *are* distinct from conventional poltergeists and are not due to hysterical reactions to the PK incidents nor to suggestion. Because of this, and until more evidence is forthcoming, I favor the demonic theory. Although not a Roman Catholic, it seems to me that the Roman Catholic viewpoint of evil infestation does fit the fact better than any other explanation. And I feel this fit is more than Procrustean. However, although I find the basic Catholic position attractive, I do not accept the dogma about it. To say I accept a demonic theory for possession cases means simply this: that the possessed person is being invaded by a foreign intelligence and that this intelligence is intrinsically evil. I cannot even begin to theorize about the nature of such beings, as to whence they come, whether they are incarnate human personalities, or something beyond. Basing my views on the arguments presented in this paper, I can only conclude that diabolic possession cases which do show PK and ESP concomitants are exactly what they claim to be—the possession of the human mind and body by an independent agency.



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## LECTURES & COURSES

### Haddon Heights, N.J.

March 23, 1975 the South Jersey Chapter of Spiritual Frontiers Fellowship is presenting a lecture entitled, *The Problem of Ghosts: Religious or Scientific?* Lecturer is Dr. Carroll Nash, Professor of Biology and Director of the Parapsychology Laboratory at St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia.

### Martinez, Calif.

At the Institute of Mystical and Parapsychological Studies at the John F. Kennedy University, Martinez, California, students may arrange for tutorial study with an interested faculty member in order to investigate special interest areas in mysticism or parapsychology.

### Ottawa, Canada

Beginning in October, Dr. Edwin McMahon and Dr. Peter Campbell of the University of Ottawa in Canada presented a course dealing with research developments in parapsychology and psychical research.

### Copenhagen, Denmark

September 3 there was a one-day seminar on Physics, Paraphysics and Psychical Research at the University of Copenhagen in Denmark. Guest speaker was Dr. Helmut Schmidt of the Foundation for Research on the Nature of Man in Durham, North Carolina. The seminar was co-sponsored by the Solid State Physics Laboratory of the University and the Danish Society for Psychical Research.

### Philadelphia, Pa.

For the 1974-1975 season the Evening Division of St. Joseph's College in Philadelphia is offering two three-credit courses in ESP. One is called General Parapsychology and the other is Psychic Development. The first college course in parapsychology ever to be offered with laboratory credit will be given in the regular daytime course of studies at St. Joseph's in the 1974-75 academic year.

Instructor is Dr. Carroll B. Nash, Director of the Parapsychology Laboratory of St. Joseph's.

### Philadelphia, Pa.

Beginning January 1975, an Introduction to Parapsychology course will be taught at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The course will be given under the aegis of the Student Development Program of the University. Dr. Jacob Schwartz, president and founder of the Delaware Valley Society of Parapsychology, will teach the course which will explore the philosophic and research implications of the field including an in-depth study of the quantitative and subjective literature. This represents the first time parapsychology has been taught at either of the two major universities in Philadelphia.

### San Jose, Calif.

The Extension Service of San Jose State University presented on December 6, 7 and 8 a short course entitled "Psychic Phenomena in the Computer Age." The course surveyed parapsychology's past and present and analyzed the research, terminology and methodology of the field.